



THE COMMONS

Midsummer Number



CHICAGO IN SUMMER

No. 35

CHICAGO.

July, 1899. WHERE THE CHILDREN PLAY

THE TWO BATTLES CONTRASTED.

Ay, that is a story that takes one's breath.
How the men rode out in the face of death.
Rode as calmly as fishermen may
Who haul their nets at the break of day.

But never was fish net hauled in the weather
That rifle and cannon and shell together
Rained on those sailors, who drew from its bed
The wise sea serpent and crushed its head.

Heroes of war are they! Song and story
Shall add their names to the list of glory:
But where is the story and where is the song
For heroes of peace and martyrs of wrong?

They fight their battles in shop and mine;
They die at their posts and make no sign,
And the living envy the fortunate dead
As they fight for a pittance of butterless bread.

They herd like beasts in a slaughter pen;
They live like cattle and suffer like men.
Why, set by the horrors of such a life,
Like a merry-go-round seems the battle's strife.

And the open sea, and the open boat,
And the deadly cannon with bellowing throat,
Oh, what are they all, with death thrown in,
To the life that has nothing to lose or win—

The life that has nothing to hope or gain,
But ill-paid labor and beds of pain?
—*Ella Wheeler Wilcox.*

STRENUOUSNESS—AND FAIR PLAY.

BY JOHN P. GAVIT.

POOR of the blood must he be whose heart does not bound at sight of a brave deed! Every man whose veins circulate anything above the temperature of cold tea loves to see, or next best to hear of, an Achievement. He that can read without a thrill the tales of the heroes of the race, whether in the deeds of war or the endurances of peace, is a poor specimen of manhood. It is something mightily more and better than mere brutality that stirs the heart of a nation with interest and enthusiasm over the heroisms of even serio-comic wars, or the honest contests of manly sport—even the prize fights, which everybody ostentatiously execrates in public and reads about on the sly! That which men love and honor in success, even the sordid and sometimes ignoble success of the market, is the inference of obstacles overcome by self-denial, industry, pluck and energy, of opponents vanquished in fair and open battle upon even terms.

Recently there have come into sight and hearing a hero and a poet of what one of them

has called "Strenuousness." Not without reason have Theodore Roosevelt and Rudyard Kipling caught the imagination of the American people. To the heart of Anglo-Saxondom at its best appeals the dominant note of Daring and Doing which tones in their acts and speeches and writings. In the one, who has incarnated his creed in courageous deed whose genuineness none may question, we see all that is essential of the fire and devotion that brought the Fathers, defiant of tyranny, across the water to conquer a pathless wilderness, to throw off with heroic violence the shackles of oppression, and to build up a nation devoted, by their intention at least, to the freedom of Man. The other in his virile song and story calls into sympathy the latent heroism of viking and patriot solved in the blood of American manhood.

These two men are sounding notes true to qualities inherent in man. And yet, in the inharmony of the social chords now playing, the notes they sound are false—so false that the men themselves are all but false in sounding them. For the one, with blood of heroes and revolutionists in his body, men say, has surrendered himself for a promise of political pottage, and marches in shackles at the wheel of the most corrupt, even if most respectable, political machine to which this nation ever has paid tribute. The other, writing out his soul by measure for hire at the bidding of publishers of cheap fiction, truckles more and more to public favor and declines toward rapidly-nearing vanishment.

What is the matter with the note they sound? Wherein is it false? Is the day of brave deeds done? Has the blood of the men who died for freedom on the field of revolution thinned out and lost its color and its heat? Has the race of the Pilgrim Fathers degenerated into a frail and sapless breed of Mammon-worshiping lick-spittles? Has patriotism given way to bunting-worship? Have we come at last to the Apotheosis of the Milk-sop?

Far, very far from it! The best proof we have in these days of the inherent nobility, truthfulness and heroism of manhood is the fact that permanent enthusiasm cannot be galvanized by cheap or fictitious appeals to

empty and purposeless motives; that it makes but small and evanescent response to buncombe, and has only temporary interest in the tawdry and dishonest twaddle that passes now for "patriotism." Verily, there is more nobility of character, more hope of the inherent quality of the human race in the disreputable mob that applauds a fair fight in the prize-ring than in a countless succession of so-called "patriotic" assemblies to ratify the extermination of a home-loving race in far-away islands in a war that reduces liberty to a ghastly, canting phrase and prostitutes the priceless heritage of American history for a "market."

The men who sound this note of "Strenuousness" have forgotten, or do not know, that Fair Play—the one indispensable condition that distinguishes honest battle from the squabbling of jackals over dead men's bones, and redeems Achievement from the shame of being mere tyranny over weakness—is wanting. No man with a soul above that of a hyena has real joy or enthusiasm in a battle in which only one outcome can be possible, or a game in which the stakes go by foregone conclusion to the most skillful cheat. None but a race of cowards could raise a cheer for a victory over a hopelessly outclassed foe. Even the drunken bully of a mining town will hesitate to shoot an unarmed man.

Those who assure us that Brotherhood is a dream and Altruism a denial of Nature's First Law, that the Strong will always win, that human interference with Survival of the Fittest can make only mischief, forget that the conditions of the modern industrial conflict have abolished fair play from the field. The individual man, coming to the fray with bare hands and an honest heart, ready to battle with all the energy and "strenuousness" that the hero and the poet are crying for, finds himself in hopeless defeat before intrenched monopoly. The Strong are depending no longer on their strength. Cunning backed by force is taking the place of honest labor and fair competition, and those who hold the earth have hedged themselves about with special privileges. Government and law, theoretically intended to even-up conditions and offset life's handicap to some extent, to protect the Weak against the Strong, have been turned about and now protect the Strong against the Weak!

This is the reason why the honest man can find little joy in the battle of life, why the true-hearted business man, not yet spoiled of his manhood, conducts his business for mere existence and with waning self-respect, and

why success is so often tainted with the suspicion—nay, with all but the certainty—of Foul Play. Let it be granted, if you will, that the skillful player has a right to have and to use to his utmost the high cards that Fate and Heredity have dealt into his hand—why now does he demand also an extra ace, or a *whole pack* in his sleeve—indeed, in plain and shameless sight upon the table!—and more than that, why does he insist upon the gun of Law with which to compel his helpless and unarmed opponent to hand over the stakes, regardless of the naked merits and skill of the players of the game? Small wonder that the man with a soul has little zest for a conflict from which fair play is excluded and in which success requires methods to which a shell-game fakir at a country fair would shame to stoop!

Mr. Roosevelt, Mr. Kipling, there are men watching you both to see if something will not turn you now to plead and battle for Fair Play. The American people respect you both, and believe in you yet. The note you have sung, and that one of you has carried with dauntless courage on a field of battle is one that men will always love. But it is a false note now. The God of battles, the God of Man waits to see whether you shall exhaust yourselves in Talk and die out as good men have done before you, or whether you will see your divine opportunity and join in Manhood's real and ultimate struggle for Fair Play, equality of opportunity, and a chance to let the Best Man win on his merits by "strenuousness" in battle without handicap or favor.

THIS ISSUE OF "THE COMMONS."

THIS issue of THE COMMONS is reduced in size, in accordance with what we expect to make our custom for the vacation months, when so many of our readers are away from home. It affords us a valuable opportunity of economy, and enables us to reserve strength for superior issues in the winter. We ask our friends to accept this greeting of midsummer, which we have sought to make vigorous and earnest in quality if not large in size, with our promise of return to our regular size of issue in the fall.

A goodly budget of notes from the settlements all over the world awaits the larger space of the September issue.

A "movement" is a curious thing. It begins in hopelessness, thrives in opposition, lives by ridicule, matures by apathy, succeeds unnoticed, and then something quite simple happens as the result of years and years of apparently unproductive agitation, and the "movement" comes to a triumphal conclusion.—*An Oxford B. A.*

View-Points Afield.

THE new interest in social ethics awakened in the Christian Endeavor Convention at Detroit by the appearance and "Practical Conferences" of Rev. Charles M. Sheldon is cheering evidence that the churches are at last coming to be stirred by the ethical tragedy which has agitated the labor world for more than a quarter of a century. The sale in England of three million copies of his simple little tale, "In His Steps," is forcing church-people there to answer the question "What would Jesus do?" not only by word but in deed. For example, a pending evangelistic campaign in a great city is said to be imperiled by the fact that the nobleman in the lead publicly denies that as a Christian he is obliged to treat his employees any better than the common law requires. But the people persist in asking "What would Jesus do?"

A KEEN social observer, not predisposed toward distinctively Christian forms of social effort, expressed surprise that in New York so many church people are taking such efficient interest in movements for social betterment, and that so many in the ranks of organized labor are speaking of them as their best friends. Another authority on the social signs of the times—a literary and economic writer widely conversant with the facts of the industrial situation there and throughout the country—recently made a significant remark at the Chicago Commons vespers. "Five years ago," he said, "I was almost anti-church, because so discouraged at the lack of interest and activity in social affairs upon the part of church people. Now," he added, "I hope more from the church than from any other source, because so many of the best workers in city politics and social movements come from church quarters."

THE press continues to teem with books on the Christian aspects of social issues. In Pike's "Divine Drama" theology is powerfully shown to be in the process of being socialized. Root's "The Profit of the Many" is an essay on the biblical doctrine and ethics of wealth. Halstead's "Christ in the Industries" more popularly than profoundly attempts to survey the industrial field from the standpoint of the Christian believer. The second volume of Dennis' "Christian Missions and Social Progress" treats as thoroughly "the dawn of a Sociological Era in Missions," and "the contri-

bution of Christian Missions to Social Progress" as his first volume did "the Sociological Scope of Christian Missions" and "Christianity the Social Hope of the Nations."

THE lecture courses at the Summer quarter of Chicago University, under the general title "Legalized and Non-Legalized Ethics," by Miss Jane Addams on "Contemporary Social Ethics," and Mrs. Florence Kelley on "Ethical Gain Through Legislation," are a deserved recognition of Hull House and an incentive toward higher settlement service elsewhere.

The decision of the faculty of the University of Michigan to give grade-credit to the incumbents of their settlement fellowship at Chicago Commons for original investigation of social conditions, is another tie between academic life and the social service of the people.

GRAHAM TAYLOR.

BUILDING PROGRESS.

Before the August number of THE COMMONS reaches our readers it is likely that work will have begun on the Morgan street wing of the new building, altho as we go to press \$1,275 are lacking of the \$16,000 demanded by the first contracts to be let, and \$8,000 of the \$24,000 required to inclose this most needed half of the building before winter. Only a little more co-operation with us will assure the new plant.

SUMMER AT THE COMMONS.

The four young women at work in the kindergarten have their hands full with the influx of the children. The amount of this work that could be done with larger force has no limit but that of our accommodations.

A delightful picnic outing was given to one hundred of our neighborhood mothers and children by the Noyes Street Mothers' Club of Evanston.

One of the pleasantest social occasions the settlement has had in many months was the party given by the Girls' Progressive Club to the mothers of the children in the summer kindergarten.

Two parties of forty girls each have been enjoying the privileges of Camp Good Will at Elgin, during July. The first of August a like-sized party of boys succeeds them, and a second party will be there the last fortnight of the month.

A detail from our force unusual but with no less satisfaction is that of Mr. F. E. Dannenberg, this year's University of Michigan Fellow, to have temporary charge of "the other" Camp Good Will at Oak Park, maintained by the people of that suburb with the coöperation of the West Side District Bureau of Associated Charities for fresh air parties from the crowded parts of Chicago.

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from the Social Settlement Point of View.

JOHN P. GAVIT, - - - - - EDITOR.

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